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CBC Newsletter

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 49 May/June 2003 Number 3

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Fall in the Foothills

September 19-21

By Dwayne Martin, NC Member-at-large

Make plans now to attend the fall meeting in Hickory, NC September 19-21, 2003. Field trips are being planned for all day trips to the Blue Ridge Mountains and half day trips to various parks around the Catawba Valley, such as Glenn Hilton Park, Riverbend Park, Bakers Mountain Park, South Mountains State Park, and the Wagner property. There will be hawk watching, but the main attraction will be warblers. Some of the parks we'll be visiting have had up to 22 species of warblers in one morning.

The Friday evening program speaker will be CBC member Simon Thompson. Simon, bird guide, naturalist, and owner of Ventures, Inc., will present a workshop on confusing fall warblers. Saturday evening Rob Bierregaard will be our featured speaker. Rob, a biology professor at UNCC, will give a talk on his work with tracking Ospreys via satellite transmitters.

Our meeting headquarters will be the Park Inn/Gateway Conference Center (909 Hwy. 70, SW, Hickory, NC 28602). Rooms with one king or two double beds will be $66.00 per night, plus 6.5% tax. This rate also includes an expanded continental breakfast and is valid through August 29, 2003. The phone numbers to the inn are 828-328-5101 or 1-800-789-0686. Hope to see everyone in Hickory!

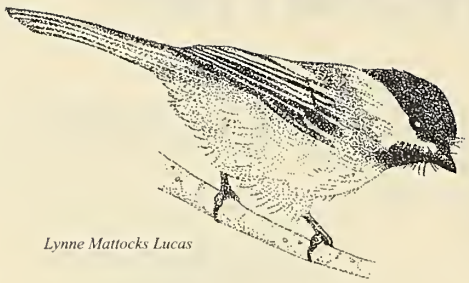
Upcoming CBC Meetings

Beaufort, SC - Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2004
Fontana, NC - April 30-May 2, 2004
Augusta, GA - Sept. 24-26, 2004

CBC group at Loveland Pass, Colorado. Summary on page 6.

CBC Memory

By Eloise Potter



Lynne Mattocks Lucas

It was the winter of 1959, the weekend that January turned into February. The place was Litchfield Beach, SC, and I was eight months pregnant with my fourth child. Edna Appleberry, of Wilmington, NC, was President of CBC, and she decreed that a young doctor from Fort Bragg was to stay with me at all times when I was in the field. He and I dared not defy her orders.

I remember seeing my first American Coots while they and I were waddling across a golf course at Myrtle Beach. While my husband and some other men stomped around in a marsh, I sat in the car and saw my first Northern Gannets and an adorable little shorebird—my first Ruddy Turnstone.

My husband and I also looked through a Balscope for the first time. On the 17th of February he surprised me with a gift I still enjoy using, a Balscope. That afternoon, with three children following me down a farm path, I took the first of goodness-only knows how many trips with my faithful Balscope on my shoulder. I have worn out half a dozen tripods in the past 40-odd years, but the scope is still as good as new.

Patricia Eilene Potter did not arrive until March 23. As soon as possible I wrote Mrs. Appleberry about the newest CBC member. "Mrs. A" duly announced Patti's birth at the next meeting and then made a confession. "Do you remember that nice young doctor from Fort Bragg who stayed close to Mrs. Potter during the last meeting? Well, it turns out that he's a dentist…but he's very good at extractions!"

"Mrs. A" had a sharp wit and could tell slightly off-color jokes without becoming anything but the lady she always was. Once she was birding with my husband and I and a friend of ours that did not share our enthusiasm for finding a Bachman's Sparrow. Our friend decided to enliven the proceedings and said to her, "Mrs. Appleberry, have you ever seen a NO U Turn?"

"No sir," she replied without a moment's hesitation, "but I have seen many an Extramarital Lark."

Mrs. Appleberry never learned to drive an automobile, but she always had friends eager to take her out birding. Her mature friends enjoyed her lively conversation, and the young men around Wilmington enjoyed the fabulous lunches she brought along as well as her expertise as a naturalist. This is the Mrs. Cecil Appleberry described by Edwin Way Teales as "one of the most enthusiastic and capable amateur naturalists we met on our trip." That trip was 17,000 miles long. If you want to learn more about "Mrs. A," read Chapter 25 in *North with the Spring*.

Editor's note: CBC Memory is a regular feature in the Newsletter. Please send me one of your favorite CBC memories (between 300-600 words) to share with others.

Feathered Features

Painted Buntings with colored leg bands (in addition to metal numbered bands) may appear at feeders along the Carolina coast again this summer. These birds have been banded over the course of the past few years by Paul Sykes at the University of Georgia. Please report any color-marked buntings to Paul at Paul_Sykes@usgs.gov or 706-542-1237. He will need to know what color bands are on which legs (two colors may be seen on either or both legs) as well as the plumage of the bird (green vs. brightly colored male). Please spread the word to friends and neighbors that feed birds and live in the coastal plain of southern North Carolina and coastal South Carolina! *Susan Campbell*

The Carolina Raptor Center is seeking donations as they prepare for the threat of West Nile virus at the Center. The 110 display and education birds will be inoculated with a vaccine. Each bird will need two shots over a three week span at a cost of $5-$8 for small birds to around $20 for eagles. To donate, mail a check (tax deductible) earmarked West Nile Prevention to: Carolina Raptor Center, PO Box 16443, Charlotte, NC. Put CBC on the check so they can keep track of which organization it's from. For more information contact Ron Clark at cain1@earthlink.net.

Bird Clubs in the Carolinas

By Louise Brown

The Piedmont Bird Club was established in 1938. In an excerpt from the 1973 history compiled by Etta Schiffman:

"Some of you may be surprised to learn that our club began as an anti-cat club. ... a group of earnest citizens, concerned by the depredations by cats on the bird population, ...approached the city council to see if something could be done by a city ordinance to stop, or... control the depredations. They were told that only protests by an organized group would be considered."

Club members have always taken an interest not only in birds, but also in nature in general and in the conservation of our natural resources. Education of the public and active community involvement is of special interest. Club activities include meetings, field trips, community services, and social events.

The Education Committee has developed a slide presentation of birds. It can be given on request to clubs, schools and other groups in the Piedmont area. Meeting programs include information about local birding, unusual sightings, and presentations about birds and other wildlife from experts in the field. All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of most months and are held at the Congregational United Church of Christ on Radiance Drive in Greensboro.

Most of our field trips are led by members to explore different local habitats. Some are just for the morning or day, and a few may venture farther afield and involve overnight or weekend stays.

For community service, the Piedmont Bird Club has taken on a job at Greensboro's Country Park, which includes maintaining and checking the bluebird boxes and cleaning up around the lakes.

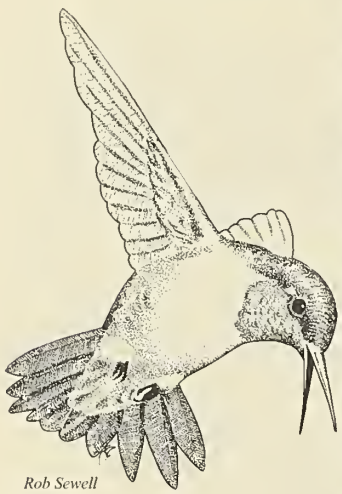
Each year the Piedmont Bird Club participates in the Christmas Bird Count for the National Audubon Society as part of an ongoing study of bird populations. The Carolina Bird Club sponsors another count, conducted each spring.

Club membership is open to anyone interested in the study and protection of birds and other natural resources. Annual membership dues are $15 for individual and $20 for family. Guests are always welcome. For more information contact: The Piedmont Bird Club, PO Box 38833, Greensboro, NC 27438 or www.greensboro.com/birdclub.

Winter 2002-2003 Another Banner Season for Hummingbirds

By Susan Campbell
(All locations in North Carolina unless specified)

The past few winters have produced some exciting hummingbird reports in the Carolinas and 2002-2003 was no exception. I managed to band 69 individuals that included five different species. I am pleased to report that a growing number of these birds were at the homes of birders.


Rob Sewell

As usual, wintering Ruby-throateds were found along the coast. There were individuals scattered throughout Beaufort/Morehead City area, including at least two at John Fussell's. Not surprisingly, more were found even further south to Wilmington and Southport. However, a record number of reports came from Dare County. Quite a few folks in that area had multiple birds. The Kodroff's in Manteo had more than a dozen in early January. Also, the northern-most limit for the species extended further, almost to Duck at the feeders of Joan Kutulas. This location is beyond last year's birds in Kitty Hawk and Southern Shores. These northerly hummers included an adult female Ruby-throated recapture in Kitty Hawk Woods from last winter. There were a surprising number of Ruby-throateds farther inland this winter, too. In Hyde County, Kelly Davis had literally swarms of them around her feeders. On one afternoon I banded seven in quick succession and calculated there were at least twice that many using her feeders.

Unfortunately, the late January snowstorm resulted in the disappearance of most but not all of the Hyde and Dare County Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Most were seen feeding during the snow but vanished a day or two later. Most likely these birds could not find enough insects to sustain them through the extremely cold weather. Some may well have perished, but others may simply have moved on to locations where they could find food.

Reports of Rufous Hummingbirds were as numerous and widespread as ever. There were individuals at feeders from Asheville to Wilmington. I banded 25 new individuals and recaptured five. One of these birds, a female in Shelby, was back for her fourth winter at the same feeder. However, this year for the first time she was sharing the yard with a second Rufous—a scrappy juvenile female. Additionally, the adult male at Louise Willis's (Betty Scott's sister) in Hampstead was back for a third season.

One of the Rufous I recaptured was one of two major highlights of the season. He was an adult male that I had originally banded last January (2002) in north Raleigh. This February, I found him in a different yard in the same neighborhood. This was not a big surprise since the original hosts had moved late last spring. What was amazing was that he had been with his new hosts since last April! For whatever reason he had never left. This was a very big first for Rufous Hummingbirds wintering in the East.

Also of special note, here in my home county of Moore I caught five different Rufous Hummingbirds. This included a third-time recapture adult male at Woodlake. However, the four new birds were all females. This total included an immature at Wayne and Fran Irvin's (they had a different Rufous last year) and one here in my own yard (at long last!). And there was even a sixth Selasphorus sighted nearby

in Whispering Pines, which makes ours the county record for wintering Selasphorus during a season in North Carolina.

The second big highlight of the winter was North Carolina's first Allen's Hummingbird. A young male turned up at the Kodroff's feeder in Manteo in mid-January. He fended off multiple Ruby-throateds and survived the snow and cold with no apparent difficulty. This bird stayed for nine weeks and entertained many birders during his visit.

The number of Calliopes wintering in the Carolinas was remarkable this winter. In North Carolina I banded three. One of those was our first adult male: at Ginger Travis's in Hillsborough. There was a young male in Greensboro and a young female at Harriet Whitsett's in Charlotte. A fourth used the gardens of Sharon Funderburk in the fall, but proved uncatchable since he never used a feeder during his stay. Apparently there was a fifth bird in Charlotte that may have actually visited two different nearby feeders at the homes of Wendy Kaplan and Harriet Whistett (again!), but only briefly. I also managed to band a young male at the home of Jerry Griggs in Irmo, SC. Finally, I received a report and photos of another young male using a feeder near Clemson on Lake Hartwell, SC.

On the other hand, Black-chinned Hummingbirds were apparently scarce this winter. I banded only one and that was an adult female in Wilmington. However, there was an adult male at another feeder in Wilmington, and there may have been a second in Mary Mc Davitt's neighborhood in Sunset Lakes.

All in all, it was once again an amazing hummingbird winter. Many thanks to all my supporters in the Carolina Bird Club. Without your help and encouragement, my work would not be possible. Many, including Carol & Richard Bacik, Barbara Brooks, Wayne & Fran Irvin, Mickey & Elayne Kodroff, Joan Kutulas, Tom & Liz Lathrop, Sally Logan, Neal & Pat Moore, Peggy Sargent, Betty Scott, and Louise Willis, have made special contributions. I have also received assistance from Wild Bird Center in Chapel Hill, Outdoor Bird Company in Durham, Wild Birds Unlimited in Cary and Wilmington, and Outer Banks Birdwatchers in Nags Head. I deeply appreciate the continued support from the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and the Hummer Bird Study Group. I would also like to recognize those who performed reconnaissance to various feeders around the state for me: Derb Carter (Raleigh area), Wayne Forsythe (Appalachian foothills), John Fussell (Carteret County), Jeff Lewis (Outer Banks), Taylor Peiphoff (greater Charlotte area), and Ramona Snaveley (Winston-Salem area). And finally, my deepest thanks to the many birders who supplied reports. The information is invaluable.

Membership Update

New Members: Josh Arrants, Cassatt, SC; Douglas Blatney, Jefferson, NC; E. Jean Kisinger, Charlotte, NC; Holly Powell, Beaufort, NC; Nadine Tope, Raleigh, NC; and Bill & Susan Zaist, Beaufort, NC.

Life Members: Bill & Susan Hilton, York, SC and Rodney Stalheim, Lenoir, NC.

Deceased Members: Mrs. John F. Benson, High Point, NC; Henry Haberyan, Charlotte, NC; and William E. Wortman, Morganton, NC.

CBC Birding in Colorado

By Kent Fiala

Derb Carter led ten other CBC members on a six-day, 1,800 mile loop around the state of Colorado on 15-20 April. The main objective of the trip was to visit leks of all the lekking grouse species in the state, one per day: Greater and Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and Lesser and Greater Prairie-Chickens. Although the birds could only be observed at a distance, except at the Greater Prairie-Chicken lek, the displays were spectacular. Our complete list of galliform species totaled 12, extended by Wild Turkey, Blue Grouse, Scaled Quail, Northern Bobwhite, Chukar, Ring-necked Pheasant, and White-tailed Ptarmigan. Along the long drives between each pre-dawn

Photo of Greater Prairie-Chicken by Van Atkins

departure for one lek site to the late-night hotel arrival for the next site, we also found time to do a lot of other birding – eventually compiling a list of 173 species! The trip was bracketed with opening and closing highlights at the Loveland Pass area. We got off to an auspicious start within an hour of leaving the airport as we visited the feeders at Loveland Basin ski resort where we observed all three species (plus the Hepburn's form) of Rosy-Finches, Pine Grosbeaks, and other high-altitude birds (also the very rare White-throated Sparrow) feeding voraciously in a snowstorm. After first observing the birds from a judicious distance, we decided to determine just how closely we could approach the feeders without disturbing the birds. The minimum viewing distance turned out to be about six inches. Yes, six inches from Rosy-Finches and Pine Grosbeaks! We were not able to follow this success with the planned visit to nearby Guanella Pass, the traditional location for finding White-tailed Ptarmigan in winter, because the road was closed by this year's heavy snow. We feared we'd miss this prized target species, but during a visit to a Greater Prairie-Chicken lek we learned from other birders that ptarmigan could be found at Loveland Pass so we returned there on the final morning. After passing through forests with picture-postcard snow on the pines and arriving above treeline atop the continental divide at 11,990 feet, we easily located two birds at close range, as well as a more distant flock up the mountain. Elated by this quick success we then raced to another location where Three-toed Woodpeckers had been recently seen, and found them just quickly enough to make it to the airport in time for the first flight out.

In between these high points, a week of unfavorable weather forecasts unfolded into actual days of mostly blue skies and pleasant temperatures as we traveled between mountain forest, pinyon-juniper woods, sage scrub, grasslands and semi-desert. Other memorable sightings of the trip, just to mention a few, included side by side comparisons of Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, an immature Northern Goshawk soaring in circles overhead, Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks, several Golden Eagles, Mountain Plover, Lewis's Woodpecker, skylarking Cassin's Sparrows, and breeding plumage McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs. The number of lifers per participant ranged from 7 to 51. Members who made the trip were: Derb Carter, Brad Carlson, Kent Fiala, Jill Froning, Steve and Tracy Shultz, Van Atkins, Katherine Higgins, Bruce Smithson, Fred Phillips, and Rob Van Epps.

Spring Birding in Clemson

By Steve Patterson

It was a highlight of the spring meeting in Clemson when Bob Wood, exactly one night before he was elected as new Club president, broke out into song, borrowing a Beatles tune to help him express comical sentiment toward a Whip-poor-will. Bob was one of four members who read original compositions in the first CBC bird-related poetry reading, which was held Friday night after the regular program. Other readers were Bob Lathlaen, Steve Patterson, and Jim McCormac, each one bringing his unique artistic perspective to instances of bird encounter.

More typical CBC meeting activities included the featured speakers on Friday and Saturday nights. On Friday, Gary Peters gave an informative presentation about the bird monitoring programs of the National Forest Service. Gary, a birder since age nine, is a wildlife program manager and planning biologist for both the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. On Saturday, Georgia resident CBC member Giff Beaton gave a very engaging slide show/teaching session that covered every eastern warbler species in multiple plumages.

During the daylight hours, birders explored lots of favorite upstate locations, ultimately finding over 150 species for the weekend. Some of the more exciting finds included Red-throated Loon, American Bittern, Red-breasted Merganser, and White-rumped Sandpiper. Landbird migrants were present but in low numbers, leaving field trip participants wanting more, and seeming to verify popular assertions that this year's migration is running "late."

Thanks to all the field trip leaders, speakers, hospitality coordinators, registration workers, and all the others working behind the scenes to make the occasion possible and enjoyable. See you in Hickory!

New Board Members Elected

Members voted on a slate of nominees at the Carolina Bird Club's spring meeting in Clemson, SC. Bob Wood is our new President. Other board members elected were: Secretary, Gail Lankford; Treasurer, Stephen Harris; SC Vice President, John Cely; SC Member-at-large, Marcia Watkins; ENC Member-at-large, Judy Murray; and WNC Member-at-large, Charlotte Goedsche. A full list of the current Board is listed on the back page of the newsletter.

Research Grants and Finance Committees Announced

During the CBC Board meeting in Clemson, Len Pardue announced the following committee members:

Research and Grants Committee - Chaired by Bob Ellis of Columbia, SC. Members are Bob Holland of Lenior, NC; Shelley Theye of Pittsboro, NC; and Bob Wood of Columbia, SC, ex-officio president.

Finance Committee - Chaired by Stephen Harris of Wilmington, NC. Members are Edith Tatum of Durham, NC; Ben Smith of Mt. Pleasant, SC, and Len Pardue of Asheville, NC.

THANKS

The past two years have gone by fast, a lot faster than I thought they would. The CBC Board and you, the members, have made my job as president enjoyable. I have learned a lot about the Club and want to encourage you to support the Club by attending meetings and recruiting new members to enjoy the birds and nature as we do. I will be coordinating the Beaufort, SC meeting in January 2004. We have several great trips lined up so make sure you put it on your calendar. Thanks for making my job easy. God bless you all. Keep in touch. *Van Atkins*

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